



Saratoga County Office for the Aging

April 2020

The Senior Sentinel

(518)884-4100

(518)885-5381

(518)863-6112

(518)587-8653

(518)654-9003

(518)798-0231



Happy Easter!



SAVE THE DATE!

Saratoga County Senior Luncheon
At Saratoga Springs City Center
522 Broadway, Saratoga Springs
May 8, 2020



What Are Supplemental Benefits?

A supplemental benefit is an item or service covered by a Medicare Advantage Plan that is not covered by Original Medicare. These items or services do not need to be provided by Medicare providers or at Medicare-certified facilities. Instead, to receive these items or services, you need to follow your plan's rules. Some commonly offered supplemental benefits are: dental care, vision care, hearing aids, and gym membership.

For the most part, supplemental benefits must be primarily health-related. Beginning in 2020, however, Medicare Advantage Plans can begin covering supplemental benefits that are not primarily health-related for beneficiaries who have chronic illnesses. These benefits can address social determinants of health for people with chronic disease. A social determinant of health is a part of your life that can affect your health in some way, such as not having access to transportation. Examples of the kind of benefits that plans can now cover are: meal delivery, transportation for non medical needs, home air cleaners, pest remediation and heart-healthy food or produce.

In order to be eligible for this new category of supplemental benefits, you must be considered chronically ill.

This means that you:

- Have at least one medically complex chronic condition that is life-threatening or significantly limits your health or function.
- Have a high risk of hospitalization or other negative health outcomes
- Require intensive care coordination.

If you meet the criteria, a Medicare Advantage Plan may offer you one of these new benefits if it has a reasonable expectation of improving or maintaining your health or function.

Since Medicare Advantage Plans will be able to create sets of supplemental benefits for people with specific chronic illness, not every member of a Medicare Advantage Plan will have access to the same set of benefits. For example, a plan might cover services like home air cleaning and carpet shampooing to its members who have asthma. A member of that plan who has asthma may be able to get these services covered, while a member who does not have asthma may not. Before enrolling in a Medicare Advantage Plan that has these new supplemental benefits, check if you meet the plan's criteria for coverage. Contact your plan to find out how to access these and other supplemental benefits.

For more information and for Medicare counseling, contact Office for the Aging at (518) 884-4100.

Reprinted from Medicare Rights Center November 2019 issue



The 2020 Census is more than a popula-

tion count. It's an opportunity to shape the future of your community.

What is the 2020 Census?

The 2020 Census counts every person living in the 50 states, District of Columbia and five U.S. Territories. The count is mandated by the Constitution and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, a nonpartisan government agency. Each home will receive an invitation to respond to a short questionnaire and can be answered by phone, by mail or online.

Why is the 2020 Census Important?

The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers and many others use to provide daily services, products and support for you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads and other resources based on census data. The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

Census Takers in Your Neighborhood.

Your information is such an important part of the 2020 Census, that if you haven't responded on your own, the Census takers will help to make sure you are counted. The Census Bureau employees will also be collecting responses for other survey, such as American Community Survey.

How Can You Verify that Someone is a Census Worker?

Census takers will visit homes in April to conduct quality check interviews, and then in mid-May to help collect responses.

If someone visits your home to collect information for the 2020 Census, check to make sure that they have a valid ID badge, with their photograph, a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. Census workers may also carry Census Bureau bags and other equipment with the Census Bureau logo.

If you still have questions about their identity, you can contact your Regional Census Center to speak with a Census Bureau representative.

You can also, confirm the Census worker independently by entering their name in the Census Bureau's staff search website.

<http://www.census.gov/staffsearch>

The takers will be conducting their work between the hours of 9 am to 9 pm.

Some Dates to Remember:

March 26-April 3 - If you haven't responded yet, a reminder post card will be mailed.

April 8-16 - A reminder letter and a paper questionnaire.

April 20-27 - A final reminder postcard before the Census Bureau will follow up in person.

May-July - Census takers will begin visiting homes that haven't responded to the Census.

For more general information on the 2020 Census you can visit online, 2020census.gov or call 1-800-923-8282.

Information from United States Census 2020.gov

Volunteer of the Month

March

Candi Bandura



Candi has been a Home Delivered Meal volunteer for over 12 years. Originally from Niskayuna, she has lived in Ballston Lake since the early 80's. Prior to retirement, she was a special education teacher for the Niskayuna School District for 23 years. We are so lucky to have volunteers like Candi who are always willing and eager to lend a helping hand.

Frozen dinners have come a long way and are certainly improved from the high fat, low fiber varieties that were mainly meat and potato based. Now consumers can buy gluten-free, vegan, calorie controlled, and other varieties of frozen meals. The question however, then becomes are they the healthiest option on the shelf?

One thing to consider is that a frozen meal does not need to be a full meal. You can add frozen vegetables or a salad on the side to increase the nutrient quality. A “meal” should contain between 300-500 calories depending upon your caloric needs, calories consumed at other meals and snacks, and your nutrient goals. Ideally, a product should be low in total, trans and saturated fats. If a product contains 300 calories, it should have no more than 9 grams of fat per serving to be considered low-fat (3 grams fat per 100 calories). Saturated fat should be 1 gram or less per serving or 15% or less of the calories from saturated fat, but with most choices, it can be difficult to get below 3 grams. Meals containing red meat, cream, butter sauce or cheese may be off limits if low-fat is the goal. For blood sugar management, including some protein such as poultry, fish, lean meat, beans or legumes can help avoid high blood sugar spikes and keep blood sugar in a good range.

While your meal may not taste sweet, sugar seems to be fairly prevalent in many frozen meals. Sugar is often added as an inexpensive filler in foods so be sure to read labels. The US Dietary Guidelines advise that no more than 10% of total calories come from sugar, which means 10 tsp. per day for men and 6 tsp. per day or less for women. Look for frozen meals containing 8 grams or less (2 tsp.) per serving. Typically, meals containing teriyaki sauce, BBQ sauce, fruit glaze or a dessert in the meal will be higher in sugar.

Sodium content tends to be high in most frozen meals. Even the so called “healthier or light” versions may contain 600 mg or more per meal. Most of us could benefit from a little less sodium in our diets given the connection between sodium intake and hypertension. Ideally, most Americans should aim for 2300 mg or less, and even less (1500 mg per day) for those with hypertension, kidney disease, congestive heart failure, liver disease, African American heritage or those aged 50 or over.

A nutrient we could all use more of is fiber. It’s estimated that only 5% of the US population meets the recommended amounts of dietary fiber set by the US Dietary Guidelines. To improve fiber intake choose frozen meals entrees that include whole grains like quinoa or brown rice or meals with beans or legumes. Adding a side salad, microwaved or steamed vegetable or fruit for dessert will also round out a meal and boost fiber intake.

Instead of relying completely on frozen, pre-packaged meals, why not try a few easy tips to create your own meals? Here are a few items to keep on hand for quick meals:

Staples:

- Cooked batches of brown rice, quinoa, barley or couscous to mix with fresh meats and fresh or frozen veggies
- A variety of frozen vegetables
- White or sweet potatoes that can be microwaved whole or sliced for a quick side dish
- Lean protein such as frozen fish, pork tenderloin or skinless poultry

Make your own meal kits:

- Stir fry dinners using squeeze ginger, low sodium soy sauce and jarred garlic
- Lower sodium chicken entrees paired with brown rice and vegetables
- Seafood that can be baked or broiled and paired with frozen veggies and sweet potatoes
- Fresh chicken with frozen veggies and quinoa
- Orange chicken (use only a quarter of the sauce) and serve over frozen brown rice and a big salad



Save The Date

TEEPA TALK

Date: Thursday, June 4, 2020
 At: Hilton Albany, 40 Lodge St, Albany, NY 12207
 Time: 8:30am-4:30 pm
More Information Coming Soon!

